



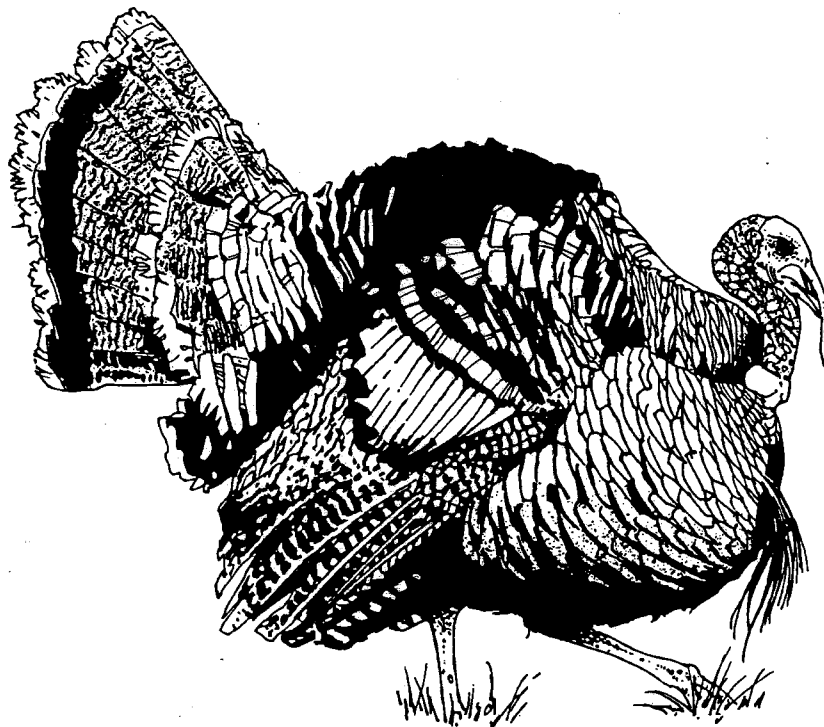
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RESULTS OF THE 1998 ILLINOIS SPRING TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY



**Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
Administrative Report**

5 April 2001

**William L. Anderson
Wildlife Harvest and Human
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William L. Anderson, Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions
Research Program¹
Paul A. Shelton, Forest Wildlife Program
Jared K. Garver, Forest Wildlife Program

Abstract: Holders of 1998 spring turkey hunting permits were surveyed via mail-questionnaire to determine their activities and harvest, opinions of current and future hunting regulations, and personal characteristics. For the 1998 spring season, 35,041 individuals received 41,534 (30,550 paid and 10,984 free landowner) permits. The mailing list included 2,972 randomly selected permit holders, of which 2,264 (76%) returned usable questionnaires. Ninety-one percent of the paid permit holders and 74% of the free landowner permit holders hunted turkeys ≥ 1 days during the spring season. Active paid permit holders hunted an average of 3.0 days during the 1st (5-day) season, 3.0 days during the 2nd (6-day) season, 3.4 days during the 3rd (8-day) season, and 3.7 days during the 4th (12-day) season, or 60%, 50%, 43%, and 31% of the days available to hunt. Active free landowner permit holders hunted averages of 2.4, 2.3, 2.6, and 2.6 days, respectively, or 48%, 38%, 33%, and 22% of the available days. Active multi-season paid permit holders hunted an average of 8.1 days. Six percent of the active paid permit holders statewide, and 8.6% of those in the North Zone, paid someone for the right to hunt turkeys on their land. Statewide, 32% of the active paid permit holders and 34% of the active free landowner permit holders, reported harvesting ≥ 1 turkeys. Most (83%) of the successful hunters harvested 1 bird. The crippling rate was estimated to be 11.9 turkeys per 100 birds harvested, or 3.3 turkeys per 100 permits issued. Majorities (or pluralities) of both active paid permit holders and active free landowner permit holders liked the present 4-season framework for spring turkey hunting, dates used for each season, and current legal hours (1/2 hour before sunrise to 12 noon) for hunting. Majorities thought that turkey hunters should be limited to 2 or 3 permits each for the spring season. However, the hunters were divided as to whether they liked or disliked the idea of creating a special spring turkey hunting archery permit and whether the turkey population had increased or decreased. Most of the hunters thought the number of turkey hunters in the area they hunted most was about right. The "typical" spring turkey hunter is male (96.7%), lives in a rural area or small town (80%), had a household income of \$49,200 in 1997, had hunted turkeys for 5.9 years, and had harvested 3.9 turkeys. Active paid permit holders spent an average of \$171 and active free landowner permit holders an average of \$110 (total \$6.34 million) for the 1998 spring season. Management implications of these findings are discussed.

¹Illinois Natural History Survey.

The comeback of the wild turkey represents one of the great success stories of modern wildlife management, both in Illinois and throughout the United States. After being extirpated from the Prairie State in the early 1900s, the species was successfully reintroduced in southern Illinois in the 1950s and 1960s. In more recent years, numerous turkeys have been live-trapped and transplanted to new locations within the state (Garver 1999a). At the present time, there are established, huntable populations of wild turkeys in at least 84 of the states' 102 counties (Garver 1999b and unpubl. data).

In 1970, Illinois held its first modern-day turkey hunting season, and 25 turkeys were harvested. The spring harvest exceeded 100 birds for the 1st time in 1979, 1,000 birds in 1986, 5,000 birds in 1994, and 10,000 birds in 1999 (Garver 1999b and unpubl data). A total of 9,125 turkeys was harvested during the 1998 spring season, when 79 counties were open to hunting (Garver 1999b). A fall archery turkey season was implemented in 1984 and a fall firearms season was added in 1989. The wild turkey is obviously a thriving and valuable natural resource in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) periodically surveys hunter groups to obtain information about their activities, opinions, and other characteristics. Such information is valuable to the DNR in making biologically sound and sociologically acceptable decisions for managing the wild turkey and other game species. The information provided improves the DNR's turkey management program, which in turn provides positive feedback to the state's sportspersons. The process is

mutually beneficial to the DNR and the hunters it serves. A previous spring turkey hunter survey was conducted following the 1990 spring season (Anderson et al. 1991).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The DNR Permit Office issued 35,041 individuals a total of 41,534 permits for Illinois' 1998 spring turkey hunting season. There were 29,923 (85%) individuals who received 1 permit, 3,745 (11%) who received 2 permits, and 1,373 (4%) who received 3 permits. Included in the permit holders were 10,984 individuals who had a free landowner permit. There were 831 people who had a free landowner permit and also ≥ 1 paid permits. The mailing list for the present survey included 2,972 individuals who were randomly selected from the spring turkey hunting permit holders. This represents an 8% sampling rate.

A 4-page, 25-question questionnaire was developed specifically for the 1998 Illinois Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (Fig. 1). The questionnaire and a letter of explanation (Fig. 2) were mailed bulk rate (Address Service Requested) to 2,972 potential turkey hunters on May 7, 1998. Non-respondents were sent 2nd and 3rd copies of the questionnaire, and accompanying letters (Figs. 3 and 4), on June 11 and July 15, respectively. All mailings included a pre-addressed, postage-paid (first class) return envelope. As of September 29, 1998, 2,264 usable questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 76%.

Data from the returned questionnaires were transferred to a computer file using a data management program (Ashton-Tate dBASE

IV). The data were analyzed with the aid of a statistical program (SPSS Inc., SPSS/PC+V 2.0). In order to make direct comparisons, data for harvest rates and crippling losses from the 1990 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (Anderson et al. 1991: Tables 7 and 10) were reexamined using the same mathematics that were applied to the 1998 data. For this reason, some estimates for the 1990 season may differ slightly from those that appeared in the final report for the 1990 survey.

HUNTING REGULATIONS IN SPRING 1998

Gobbler (male) turkeys and hens with visible beards were legal game during 4 consecutive seasons in Illinois during the spring of 1998. Beginning April 6 in the South Zone and April 13 in the North Zone, the seasons were 5, 6, 8, and 12 days in length. Permit quotas were established for each open county. One legal turkey was allowed per permit, with a maximum of 3 permits per person. Shooting hours were 1/2 hour before sunrise to 12 noon. Legal weapons included shotguns (20 gauge to 10 gauge loaded with #7-1/2 to #4 shot) or bow (long, recurve, or compound, with a minimum pull of 40 pounds) and arrow. It is illegal to use live turkey decoys, recorded calls, dogs, or bait for hunting turkeys in Illinois.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study were organized and interpreted relative to permit type (paid or free landowner), season (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th), and/or zone (north or south). In some cases,

multi-season paid permit holders were also examined separately. The zones, along with the counties open to spring turkey hunting in 1998, are illustrated in Figure 5.

Turkey Hunting Permits

Of the 2,264 individuals who participated in this survey, 2,237 indicated the types and numbers of permits they received for the 1998 spring turkey hunting season (Table 1). These 2,237 permit holders included 1,713 (77%) individuals who had paid permits and 652 (29%) who had free landowner permits. There were 128 (6%) individuals who had both paid and free landowner permits. Among the paid permit holders, 1,303 (76%) had 1 permit, 302 (18%) had 2 permits, and 108 (6%) had 3 permits.

Hunting Activities

Percentage Hunting. Almost all (91%) of the paid permit holders hunted turkeys ≥ 1 days during the spring season in 1998 (Table 2). The paid permit holders hunted at high rates (86% to 91%) in all 4 seasons. For multi-season paid permit holders, the rate was 98%. In contrast, the free landowner permit holders were active at relatively low rates (35% to 55%) during the individual seasons. However, it should be noted that the paid permits were valid for only 1 season, whereas each free landowner permit was valid for all 4 seasons. Thus, it is not surprising that low percentages of free landowner permit holders hunted during any one season. When all 4 seasons are taken into account, 74% of the free landowner permit holders reported going

afield for ≥ 1 days.

Days Afield. The paid permit holders who hunted spent an average of 4.3 days afield during the 1998 spring turkey hunting season (Table 3). Hunters were afield more days in the South Zone (4.8 days) than in the North Zone (4.0 days). Statewide, they also were afield more days during the 3rd and 4th seasons (3.4 and 3.7 days) than during the 1st and 2nd seasons (3.0 and 3.0 days), which is proportional to the lengths of the seasons. Active multi-season paid permit hunters were afield an average of 8.1 days.

Active free landowner permit holders, who could hunt all 4 seasons, spent an average of 5.7 days afield (Table 3). Like active paid permit holders, active free landowner permit holders spent more days afield in the South Zone (6.2 days) than in the North Zone (5.4 days). Similarly, the active free permit holders statewide spent more days afield during the 3rd and 4th seasons (2.6 days and 2.6 days) than during the 1st and 2nd seasons (2.4 days and 2.3 days).

Paid Land Operator to Hunt. For the entire state, 6.1% of the active paid permit holders paid someone for the right to hunt turkeys on their land during spring 1998 (Table 4). The percentage who paid to hunt was relatively high in the North Zone (8.6%) and relatively low in the South Zone (1.7%). In comparison, 2.3% of the active paid permit holders paid a land operator for the right to hunt turkeys during spring 1990 (Anderson et al. 1991).

Hunting Success. One-third (32%) of the active paid permit holders reported harvesting ≥ 1 turkeys during the 1998 spring season (Table 5). Success was greater in the North Zone (35%) than in the South Zone (28%). Statewide, the active paid permit holders also had a higher success rate during the 1st season (35%) than during the other 3 seasons (20% to 24%). As might be expected, more than one-half (55%) of the active multi-season paid permit holders successfully harvested ≥ 1 turkeys. The trend in success rates for active free landowner permit holders was similar to that of paid permit hunters: 34% statewide, 41% in the North Zone, and 23% in the South Zone.

Among the successful paid permit holders statewide, 83% reported taking 1 turkey, whereas 13% took 2 turkeys and 4% took 3 turkeys. For successful free landowner permit holders, the percentages were 88%, 9%, and 3%, respectively (20% of the free landowner permit holders also had ≥ 1 paid permits--see Table 1). For all permit holders (paid and free landowner combined), the overall success rate was 38.3 turkeys per 100 active hunters or 28.0 turkeys per 100 permits issued.

Crippling Rates. Statewide, 4.0% of the active paid permit holders and 4.2% of the active free landowner permit holders reported crippling and losing ≥ 1 turkeys during the 1998 spring season (Table 6). Because they hunted more days, a relatively high proportion (8.8%) of the active multi-season paid permit holders crippled and lost ≥ 1 turkeys. Although there were no clear-cut trends, crippling rates may have been slightly higher in the North Zone versus the South Zone and during the 1st season

versus the other 3 seasons.

The data suggest that, on the average, 11.9 turkeys were crippled and lost per 100 turkeys bagged during the 1998 spring season in Illinois (Tables 5 and 6). This estimate equates to 4.7 turkeys being crippled and lost per 100 active hunters (paid and free landowner permit holders combined), or 3.3 turkeys crippled and lost per 100 permits issued, for the 1998 spring season. To make a direct comparison, the same mathematics were applied to the 1990 data (Anderson et al. 1991: Tables 7 and 10)--see last paragraph in the METHODS section. The results indicated that 25.6 turkeys were crippled and lost per 100 bagged in 1990, which equates to 5.5 turkeys being crippled and lost per 100 permits issued. In Virginia, an average of 10 turkeys were crippled and lost per 100 bagged (Mosby and Handley 1943), and on managed gobbler hunts in South Carolina, an estimated 20 turkeys were crippled and lost per 100 bagged (Shaffer and Gwynn 1967).

Statewide in 1998, 4.9% (n=638) of successful hunters (paid and free landowner permit holders combined) reported crippling and losing ≥ 1 turkeys. The corresponding percentage for unsuccessful hunters was 3.5% (n=1,300). The numbers of turkeys crippled and lost per 100 hunters were 6.1 for successful hunters and 3.7 for unsuccessful hunters.

Opinions of Hunters

4-Season Framework. Regardless of zone, season, or type and number of permits held, majorities (57-75%) of the turkey hunters liked the 4-season framework for spring turkey hunting in

Illinois (Table 7). Statewide, only 15% of the active paid permit holders and 7% of the active free landowner permit holders disliked the 4-season framework.

Number of Turkey Permits per Hunter. When asked to express their opinion of the maximum number of permits that a turkey hunter should be allowed to receive per spring season, majorities (60-76%) of the turkey hunters said 2 or 3 (Table 8). This attitude prevailed in both zones, and among both active paid permit holders and active free landowner permit holders.

Dates for Spring Seasons. Overwhelming majorities (71-82%) of the turkey hunters thought the dates for the spring seasons were about right (Table 9). This opinion dominated among both active paid permit holders and active free landowner permit holders, and it did not change with zone or season hunted, or with multi-season paid permit hunters.

Legal Hunting Hours. When asked to state their views of legal hunting hours during the spring season, a plurality (44%) of the active paid permit holders and a majority (60%) of the active free landowner permit holders voted for no change--i.e., 1/2 hour before sunrise to 12 noon (Table 10). Among those hunters who had different views, most wanted to allow hunting from 1/2 before sunrise to sunset. However, these hunters represented only 38% of the active paid permit holders and 26% of the active free landowner permit holders.

Special Archery Permit. The hunters were asked how they felt about the idea of creating a special archery permit that would be valid for all 4 spring seasons. Hunters would be

allowed to purchase only 1 of these special permits, and they would not be eligible to purchase a regular spring turkey permit. Responses were mixed on this issue, with 38% of the active paid permit holders liking the idea and 35% disliking it (Table 11). Active free landowner permit holders disclosed similar feelings: 32% liked and 34% disliked.

The hunters were also asked whether they would purchase the special archery permit if it were available for the 1999 spring season. Seventeen percent of the active paid permit holders and 8% of the free landowner permit holders said "yes" (Table 11).

Abundance of Turkeys. Statewide, 33% of the active paid permit holders and 35% of the active free landowner permit holders thought the number of turkeys in the area they hunted most had increased during the past 3 years (Table 12). Conversely, 24% and 31% of these hunters, respectively, felt that turkey numbers had decreased. Hunters in the North Zone were more apt to say that turkey numbers had increased than decreased, whereas the impressions of South Zone hunters were just the opposite. The views of active multi-season paid permit holders regarding changes in turkey numbers were similar to those of other hunters in the respective zones.

Similarly, majorities of the active paid permit holders (52%) and active free landowner permit holders (57%) in the North Zone thought the number of turkeys in the area they hunted most was about right (Table 13). In the South Zone, majorities (54% and 59%, respectively) thought the number of turkeys was too low. For the active paid permit holders, these attitudes prevailed

regardless of the season in which they hunted. The opinions of active multi-season permit holders about the status of the turkey population were in line with those of other hunters in the 2 zones.

Number of Hunters. Majorities (54-73%) of the active turkeys hunters thought the number of hunters in the area they hunted most was about right (Table 14). This opinion was consistent across zones, seasons, and types/numbers of permits held.

Profile of Turkey Hunters

Personal Characteristics. For active paid permit holders, 96.7% were male and 80% of them lived in a rural area or small town (Table 15). Their mean household income was \$49,200 in 1997. For active free landowner permit holders, 89.3% were male, 90% lived in a rural area or small town, and their mean household income was \$46,200. Except for higher mean incomes, these characteristics are almost identical to those described for participants in the 1990 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (Anderson et al. 1991).

Hunting Experience. Active paid permit holders had hunted turkeys for an average of 5.9 years, and they had harvested an average of 3.9 turkeys (Table 16). Thirty-four percent had never harvested a turkey, whereas 35% had harvested ≥ 3 turkeys. In contrast, paid permit holders in the 1990 survey had hunted turkeys for an average of 3.7 years, and they had harvested an average of 1.7 turkey; 52% had never harvested a turkey and 18%

had harvested ≥ 3 turkeys. The years of experience and the number of turkeys harvested by active free landowner permit holders were similar to those of active paid permit holders (Table 16).

Active paid permit holders had hunted ≥ 1 species other than turkeys for an average of 25 years (Table 17). The average for active free landowner permit holders was almost the same: 26 years. The other species hunted by the highest percentage of hunters, whether paid permit holders or free landowner permit holders, was deer. The species that ranked 2nd through 5th were squirrel, rabbits, pheasants, and quail. With minor exception, these findings duplicate those of the 1990 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey.

Economics of Turkey Hunting

Based on data provided by the turkey hunters, active paid permit holders spent an average of \$171 each for the spring season in Illinois in 1998 (Table 18). Active free landowner permit holders spent much less, \$110 each. For both groups of hunters, total expenditures were estimated to be \$6.34 million. This represents an 130% increase in expenditures since 1990, when total outlay was estimated at \$2.76 million (Anderson et al. 1991). The increase in expenditures in 1998 was due primarily to an increase in the number of turkey hunters, which more than doubled from 1990 to 1998.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this survey indicate that active paid permit

holders spent an average of 3.0 days afield during the 1st (5-day) season, 3.0 days during the 2nd (6-day) season, 3.4 days during the 3rd (8-day) season, and 3.7 days during the 4th (12-day) season, hunting turkeys in Illinois during spring 1998 (Table 3). These averages equate to 60%, 50%, 43%, and 31% of the days available to hunt. For active free landowner permit holders, the averages were 2.4, 2.3, 2.6, and 2.6 days, respectively, or 48%, 38%, 33%, and 22% of the available days. Thus, as was the case in 1990 when there were 3 spring seasons (Anderson et al. 1991), the turkey hunters made greater use of the days available to hunt during the shorter (earlier) seasons than during the longer (later) seasons. To the extent that maximum use of hunting opportunity is important, shorter seasons appear to be preferred to longer seasons for spring turkey hunting in Illinois.

The 1990 survey indicated that Illinois hunters were relatively inexperienced in the art of spring turkey hunting. These hunters had spring turkey hunted for an average of 3.7 years, and they had harvested an average of 1.7 turkeys (Anderson 1991). Importantly, 52% of the hunters had never harvested a turkey. In comparison, the hunters in 1998 had hunted turkeys for an average of 5.9 years, and they had harvested an average of 3.9 birds (Table 16). The proportion of hunters who had not harvested a turkey decreased to 34%. Clearly, hunters in the late 1990s were much more experienced at spring turkey hunting than they were only a few years earlier.

The increase in experience acquired by spring turkey hunters

was reflected in the data for hunting efficiency. In 1990, an average of 25.4 turkeys were harvested, and 6.5 birds were crippled and lost, per 100 active hunters. In 1998, the harvest rate increased to 38.3 turkeys per 100 active hunters, while the crippling/losing rate decreased to 4.7 birds per 100 active hunters (Tables 5 and 6). Or, the crippling/losing rate decreased from 25.6 birds per 100 harvested in 1990 to 11.9 birds per 100 harvested in 1998. It appears that the increase in experience, coupled with an emphasis on hunter education (Anderson et al. 1991), has paid dividends in terms of increasing harvest rates and decreasing crippling rates during the spring turkey hunting season in Illinois.

Most hunters--including paid permit holders and free landowner permit holders--appear to be satisfied with the current 4-season framework, season dates, and legal shooting hours, for spring turkey hunting in Illinois (Tables 7, 9, 10). Although active paid permit holders exhibited some sentiment for extending legal hunting hours to sunset (38%), a plurality (44%) preferred to continue with the current 12-noon daily closing. Another 16% opted for a 1-pm closing. Thus, paid permit holders were more ambivalent than free landowner permit holders with regards to the preferred closing time for spring turkey hunting.

Survey results concerning the possibility of the DNR creating a new "archery-only" spring turkey hunting permit (valid for all 4 seasons) provided no clear direction on how to proceed. Given that hunter densities are a primary consideration in setting permit quotas, the potential impacts of this proposed

program on hunter densities must be addressed prior to recommending implementation. The issuance of 1 special archery permit would have the same impact on hunter densities as the issuance of 4 regular permits (1 for each of the 4 seasons), since archers would be allowed to hunt throughout all seasons. Hunter density is obviously an issue of concern, as it was the impetus for the DNR to divide spring hunting into 4 separate seasons in order to accommodate recreational demand while maintaining safe conditions. The implementation of the special archery permit would seem contrary to this objective.

Overall, it appears that resident spring turkey hunters are generally satisfied with spring turkey hunting regulations and the turkey management program that the DNR oversees in Illinois.

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Table 1. Types of turkey hunting permits held by 2,237 of the 2,264 individuals who participated in the 1998 Illinois Spring Turkey Hunter Survey. There were 27 respondents who did not provide information about the types of permits they received.

Season	Paid Permit Holders	Free Landowner Permit Holders
1st	613	652 ^a
2nd	504	652 ^a
3rd	533	652 ^a
4th	501	652 ^a
Total	1,713 ^{b,c}	652 ^{a,c}

^aSame hunters. Each free landowner permit was valid for all 4 seasons.

^bIncludes 1,303 individuals who had 1 paid permit, 302 who had 2 paid permits, and 108 who had 3 paid permits.

^cThere were 128 individuals who had ≥ 1 paid permits and a free landowner permit.

Table 2. Percentage of permit holders who hunted during the spring turkey hunting season in Illinois in 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a	Free Landowner Permit Holders
1st	85.8 (400)	54.8 (652)
2nd	90.6 (330)	41.1 (652)
3rd	87.7 (316)	39.0 (652)
4th	88.7 (300)	34.7 (652)
Multi	98.4 (367)	
Total	91.0 (1,713)	73.9 (652)

^aData for each season are for respondents who had permits for that season only.

Table 3. Mean number of days spent afield by active turkey hunters during the spring turkey hunting season in Illinois in 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses..

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a	Free Landowner Permit Holders
North	1st	2.9 (212)	2.3 (216)
	2nd	2.9 (190)	2.2 (160)
	3rd	3.1 (186)	2.5 (156)
	4th	3.9 (163)	2.6 (133)
	Multi	7.6 (184)	
	Total	4.0 (935)	5.4 (297)
South	1st	3.2 (114)	2.7 (135)
	2nd	3.0 (104)	2.6 (99)
	3rd	4.1 (80)	2.7 (92)
	4th	3.4 (82)	2.7 (86)
	Multi	8.7 (144)	
	Total	4.8 (524)	6.2 (182)
Entire State	1st	3.0 (326)	2.4 (351)
	2nd	3.0 (294)	2.3 (259)
	3rd	3.4 (266)	2.6 (248)
	4th	3.7 (245)	2.6 (219)
	Multi	8.1 (328)	
	Total	4.3 ^b (1,459)	5.7 ^c (479)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

^b10.8% were afield 1 day, 19.5% 2 days, 18.2% 3 days, 29.5% 4-5 days, 16.8% 6-10 days, and 5.2% 11-25 days.

^c14.6% were afield 1 day, 14.6% 2 days, 11.3% 3 days, 21.5% 4-5 days, 22.8% 6-10 days, and 15.2 % 11-25 days.

Table 4. Percentage of active turkey hunters who paid someone for the right to hunt on their land in Illinois during spring 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Zone	Paid Permit Holders
North	8.6 (931)
South	1.7 (524)
Entire State	6.1 (1,455)

Table 5. Percentage of active hunters who reported harvesting ≥ 1 turkeys (gobblers and/or bearded hens) in Illinois during spring 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a		Free Landowner Permit Holders
North	1st	42.0	(212)	
	2nd	19.5	(190)	
	3rd	28.0	(186)	
	4th	27.6	(163)	
	Multi	56.0	(184)	
	Total	34.9	(935)	41.4 (297)
South	1st	22.0	(114)	
	2nd	20.2	(104)	
	3rd	12.6	(80)	
	4th	15.8	(82)	
	Multi	54.1	(144)	
	Total	28.0	(524)	23.1 (182)
Entire State	1st	34.9	(326)	
	2nd	19.7	(294)	
	3rd	23.4	(266)	
	4th	23.7	(245)	
	Multi	55.2	(328)	
	Total	32.4 ^b	(1,459)	34.4 ^c (479)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

^bIncluded 26.9% who harvested 1 turkey, 4.2% who harvested 2 turkeys, and 1.3% who harvested 3 turkeys.

^cIncluded 30.1% who harvested 1 turkey, 3.3% who harvested 2 turkeys, and 1.0% who harvested 3 turkeys.

Table 6. Percentage of active hunters who reported crippling and losing ≥ 1 turkeys in Illinois during spring 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a	Free Landowner Permit Holders
North	1st	3.8 (212)	
	2nd	1.6 (190)	
	3rd	2.1 (186)	
	4th	4.3 (163)	
	Multi	7.6 (184)	
	Total	3.9 (935)	4.7 (297)
South	1st	4.4 (114)	
	2nd	0.0 (104)	
	3rd	0.0 (80)	
	4th	1.2 (82)	
	Multi	10.4 (144)	
	Total	4.0 (524)	3.3 (182)
Entire State	1st	4.0 (326)	
	2nd	1.0 (294)	
	3rd	1.5 (266)	
	4th	3.3 (245)	
	Multi	8.8 (328)	
	Total	4.0 ^b (1,459)	4.2 ^c (479)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

^bIncluded 3.6% who crippled 1 turkey and 0.4% who crippled 2-4 turkeys.

^cEach of these respondents reported crippling 1 turkey.

Table 7. Opinions of active turkey hunters toward the present 4-season framework for spring turkey hunting (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:

*What is your opinion of the present 4-season (5, 6, 8 & 12 days) framework whereby nearly all hunters are able to obtain at least 1 permit?

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders*			Free Landowner Permit Holders		
		Like	Dislike	No Opinion	Like	Dislike	No Opinion
North	1st	71%	15%	14% (211)			
	2nd	74	16	10 (189)			
	3rd	72	11	17 (186)			
	4th	75	12	13 (163)			
	Multi	75	14	11 (183)			
	Total	73	14	13 (932)	62%	7%	31% (294)
South	1st	69	13	18 (113)			
	2nd	57	22	21 (102)			
	3rd	70	15	15 (79)			
	4th	72	12	16 (81)			
	Multi	74	17	9 (144)			
	Total	69	16	15 (519)	66	6	28 (181)
Entire State	1st	71	14	15 (324)			
	2nd	68	19	13 (291)			
	3rd	71	13	16 (265)			
	4th	74	12	14 (244)			
	Multi	74	16	10 (327)			
	Total	72	15	13 (1,451)	63	7	30 (475)

*Data for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

Table 8. Opinions of active turkey hunters toward the maximum number of turkey permits an individual should be allowed to receive (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:

***Currently, Illinois turkey hunters can obtain up to a maximum of 3 permits for the spring season provided the county permit quota is unfilled and permits are available. How many permits do you think an individual should be able to receive?**

Zone	Paid Permit Holders				
	1	2	3	4	5
North	15%	49%	27%	7%	2% (929)
South	19	46	27	7	1 (522)
Entire State	16	48	27	7	2 (1,451)

Zone	Free Landowner Permit Holders				
	1	2	3	4	5
North	22%	46%	28%	3%	1% (292)
South	33	39	21	4	3 (181)
Entire State	27	43	25	3	2 (473)

Table 9. Opinions of active turkey hunters toward the dates for the spring turkey hunting season (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:

*The 1998 Spring Turkey Season dates in Illinois were April 6-10, April 11-16, April 17-24, April 25-May 6 in the Southern Zone and April 13-17, April 18-23, April 24-May 1, May 2-13 in the Northern Zone. How do you feel about using similar dates for the 1999 Spring Turkey Season?

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a				Free Landowner Permit Holders			
		Too Early	Too Late	About Right	No Opinion	Too Early	Too Late	About Right	No Opinion
North	1st	12%	3%	81%	4% (212)				
	2nd	6	5	81	8 (190)				
	3rd	2	11	82	5 (185)				
	4th	3	19	71	7 (163)				
	Multi	2	11	82	5 (184)				
	Total	5	9	80	6 (934)	4%	10%	77%	9% (296)
South	1st	14	2	75	9 (113)				
	2nd	8	5	80	7 (104)				
	3rd	6	9	80	5 (78)				
	4th	6	6	82	6 (82)				
	Multi	10	8	78	4 (144)				
	Total	9	6	79	6 (521)	8	8	78	6 (181)
Entire State	1st	13	2	79	6 (325)				
	2nd	7	5	81	7 (294)				
	3rd	3	11	81	5 (263)				
	4th	4	14	75	7 (245)				
	Multi	5	9	81	5 (328)				
	Total	7	8	79	6 (1,455)	5	9	77	9 (477)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

Table 10. Opinions of active turkey hunters toward legal hours for hunting turkeys (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:

*Legal spring turkey hunting hours in Illinois are currently from ½ hour before sunrise to noon. Which of the following most closely describes your preference for legal hunting hours?

Zone	Paid Permit Holders			
	Keep the Legal Hunting Hours "as they are now"	Allow Hunting From ½ Hour Before Sunrise to 1p.m.	Allow Hunting From ½ Hour Before Sunrise to Sunset	No Opinion
North	42%	17%	40%	1% (933)
South	48	15	35	2 (522)
Entire State	44	16	38	2 (1,455)

Zone	Free Landowner Permit Holders			
	Keep the Legal Hunting Hours "as they are now"	Allow Hunting From ½ Hour Before Sunrise to 1p.m.	Allow Hunting From ½ Hour Before Sunrise to Sunset	No Opinion
North	58%	14%	27%	1% (296)
South	62	11	26	1 (181)
Entire State	60	13	26	1 (477)

Table 11. Opinions of active turkey hunters toward the proposal to create a special spring turkey archery permit (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

*Currently, Illinois hunters who wish to hunt turkeys with archery equipment during the spring season may do so using the regular spring turkey permit. This permit is only valid for one of the four seasons (except free landowner permits). Some hunters have proposed that the Department of Natural Resources should offer a limited number of special spring turkey hunting archery permits that would be valid throughout all four spring seasons. However, hunters could purchase only one of the special spring turkey archery permits, and they would NOT be eligible to purchase a regular spring turkey permit. Do you like or dislike this proposal?

Zone	Paid Permit Holders			Free Landowner Permit Holder		
	Like	Dislike	No Opinion	Like	Dislike	No Opinion
North	38%	35%	27% (931)	32%	33%	35% (296)
South	39	34	27 (521)	33	36	31 (180)
Entire State	38	35	27 (1,452)	32	34	34 (476)

*If the new spring turkey archery permit (described above) is available for the 1999 spring season, would you purchase one?

Zone	Paid Permit Holders			Free Landowner Permit Holder		
	Yes	No	Undecided	Yes	No	Undecided
North	17%	62%	21% (931)	7%	70%	23% (297)
South	17	62	21 (521)	10	73	17 (180)
Entire State	17	62	21 (1,452)	8	71	21 (477)

Table 12. Opinions of active turkey hunters as to changes in the turkey population in the area they hunted most (Illinois, spring 1998).
Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:									
Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a				Free Landowner Permit Holders			
		Increased	Decreased	Unchanged	Don't Know	Increased	Decreased	Unchanged	Don't Know
North	1st	37%	19%	29%	15% (211)				
	2nd	32	19	35	14 (190)				
	3rd	35	17	32	16 (186)				
	4th	40	19	28	13 (163)				
	Multi	37	22	30	11 (184)				
	Total	36	19	31	14 (934)	39%	24%	28%	9% (296)
South	1st	30	34	18	18 (114)				
	2nd	28	26	27	19 (104)				
	3rd	24	30	24	22 (80)				
	4th	32	26	23	19 (82)				
	Multi	28	37	26	9 (144)				
	Total	28	31	24	17 (524)	26	43	21	10 (182)
Entire State	1st	34	25	25	16 (325)				
	2nd	30	22	32	16 (294)				
	3rd	32	20	30	18 (266)				
	4th	37	21	27	15 (245)				
	Multi	33	29	28	10 (328)				
	Total	33	24	28	15 (1,458)	35	31	25	9 (478)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

Table 13. Opinions of active turkey hunters as to the status of the turkey population in the area they hunted most (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:

*In your judgement, is the number of turkeys in the area you hunted most in 1998 too low, about right, or too high?

Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a				Free Landowner Permit Holders			
		Too Low	About Right	Too High	No Opinion	Too Low	About Right	Too High	No Opinion
North	1st	33%	57%	2%	8% (211)				
	2nd	42	48	2	8 (190)				
	3rd	33	57	2	8 (186)				
	4th	39	51	2	8 (163)				
	Multi	44	48	1	7 (184)				
	Total	38	52	2	8 (934)	35%	57%	3%	5% (297)
South	1st	54	34	1	11 (114)				
	2nd	59	28	1	12 (104)				
	3rd	48	42	0	10 (80)				
	4th	49	35	0	16 (82)				
	Multi	57	40	0	3 (144)				
	Total	54	36	<1	10 (524)	59	33	1	7 (182)
Entire State	1st	40	49	2	9 (325)				
	2nd	48	40	2	10 (294)				
	3rd	38	53	1	8 (266)				
	4th	42	46	1	11 (245)				
	Multi	50	44	1	5 (328)				
	Total	44	46	1	9 (1,458)	44	48	2	6 (479)

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

Table 14. Opinions of active turkey hunters as to the number of hunters in the area they hunted most (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following question:												
Zone	Season	Paid Permit Holders ^a					Free Landowner Permit Holders					
		Too Low	About Right	Too High	No Opinion		Too Low	About Right	Too High	No Opinion		
North	1st	2%	73%	16%	9% (212)							
	2nd	3	72	16	9 (190)							
	3rd	3	67	19	11 (186)							
	4th	4	69	17	10 (163)							
	Multi	2	70	22	6 (184)							
	Total	3	70	18	9 (935)		2%	67%	23%		8% (297)	
South	1st	2	62	29	7 (114)							
	2nd	3	58	28	11 (104)							
	3rd	3	70	15	12 (78)							
	4th	1	71	17	11 (82)							
	Multi	2	55	40	3 (144)							
	Total	2	62	28	8 (522)		3	54	35		8 (181)	
Entire State	1st	2	69	21	8 (326)							
	2nd	3	67	20	10 (294)							
	3rd	3	68	18	11 (264)							
	4th	3	70	17	10 (245)							
	Multi	2	63	30	5 (328)							
	Total	2	67	22	9 (1,457)		2	63	27		8 (478)	

^aData for each season are for respondents who hunted that season only.

Table 15. Some personal characteristics of active turkey hunters in Illinois during spring 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Characteristic	Paid Permit Holders	Free Landowner Permit Holders
Type of residence	(1,455)	(476)
Rural (country, <500 residents)	36%	62%
Small town (500 to 20,000 residents)	44	28
Urban (>20,000 residents)	20	10
Sex	(1,455)	(477)
Male	96.7%	89.3%
Female	3.3	10.7
Household Income for 1997	(1,335)	(424)
<\$10,000	2%	4%
\$10,000-\$20,000	6	11
\$20,000-\$30,000	14	17
\$30,000-\$40,000	21	16
\$40,000-\$50,000	18	15
>\$50,000	39	37
Mean	\$49,200	\$46,200

Table 16. Number of years that active turkey hunters had hunted turkeys and the number of turkeys they had harvested during their lifetime (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Activity and Zone	Paid Permit Holders	Free Landowner Permit Holders
Mean number of years hunted turkeys		
North	5.6 (934)	6.3 (296)
South	6.5 (523)	6.1 (181)
Entire State	5.9 ^a (1,457)	6.2 ^b (477)
Mean number of turkeys harvested		
North	3.8 (935)	3.9 (297)
South	4.0 (524)	3.0 (182)
Entire State	3.9 ^c (1,459)	3.5 ^d (479)

^a65% had hunted turkeys for 1-5 years, 22% for 6-10 years, and 13% for 11-40 years.

^b64% had hunted turkeys for 1-5 years, 23% for 6-10 years, and 13% for 11-50 years.

^c34% of the hunters had harvested 0 turkeys, 19% had harvested 1 turkey, 12% had harvested 2 turkeys, and 35% had harvested ≥ 3 turkeys.

^d37% had harvested 0 turkeys, 16% had harvested 1 turkey, 14% had harvested 2 turkeys, and 33% had harvested ≥ 3 turkeys.

Table 17. Number of years that active turkey hunters had hunted ≥ 1 game species other than turkeys and the percentage who had hunted each species (Illinois, spring 1998). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Activity and Zone	Paid Permit Holders	Free Landowner Permit Holders
Mean number of years hunted ≥ 1 other species		
North	25 (919)	26 (290)
South	26 (517)	27 (180)
Entire State	25 ^a (1,436)	26 ^b (470)
Percentage of Hunters	(1,412)	(470)
Deer	89	94
Squirrels	57	63
Rabbits	51	54
Pheasants	44	31
Quail	43	45
Geese	31	23
Ducks	32	26
Raccoons	13	21
Other	20	16

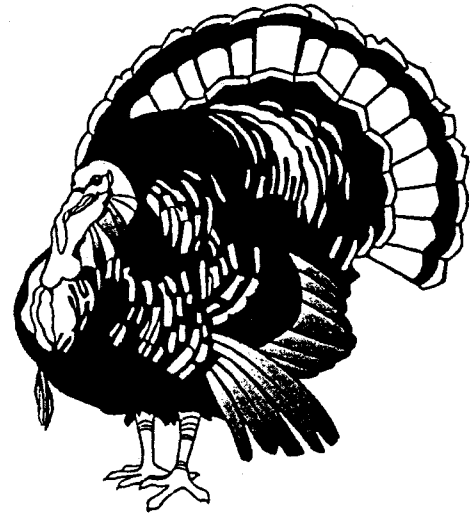
^a17% had hunted ≥ 1 game species other than turkeys for 1-10 years, 25% for 11-20 years, 29% for 21-30 years, and 29% for 31-70 years.

^b24% had hunted ≥ 1 game species other than turkeys for 1-10 years, 19% for 11-20 years, 21% for 21-30 years, and 36% for 31-75 years.

Table 18. Expenditures by active turkey hunters in Illinois during spring 1998. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Expenditure	Paid Permit Holders	Free Landowner Permit Holders
	(1,451)	(478)
\$0 - \$25	8%	25%
\$26 - \$50	16	20
\$51 - \$100	23	23
\$101 - \$200	26	18
\$201 - \$300	11	6
> \$300	16	8
Mean	\$171	\$110
Total	\$5,452,700	\$892,900 = \$6,345,600

1998 ILLINOIS SPRING TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY



INSTRUCTIONS

To properly manage the Illinois wild turkey population, the Department of Natural Resources needs more information about Illinois turkey hunters, their hunting experiences, and their opinions of hunting regulations and other issues. Please answer all questions that apply to you, beginning with Part I.

Your responses are strictly confidential and will never be associated with your name. Since you are part of a small, randomly selected group, your participation is very important.

When completed, insert questionnaire into the self-addressed envelope and mail. POSTAGE IS PREPAID.

YOUR COMMENTS ARE WELCOME BUT PLEASE WRITE THEM ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER TO RECEIVE PROPER ATTENTION.

PART A: 1998 SPRING TURKEY SEASON

- Did you receive a free landowner/tenant spring turkey hunting permit (valid only for your owned/leased property) for the 1998 spring turkey hunting season? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Yes.....1

No.....2

- Excluding landowner/tenant permits, how many permits did you have for turkey hunting during each of the 4 spring turkey seasons in Illinois in 1998? (circle number or numbers for appropriate answer)

1 st Season	1	2	3
2 nd Season	1	2	3
3 rd Season	1	2	3
4 th Season	1	2	3

Figure 1. The questionnaire used for the 1998 Illinois Spring Turkey Hunter Survey.

Figure 1 - continued.

3. Did you hunt during the spring turkey season in Illinois in 1998? (circle number or numbers for appropriate answer)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1 st Season	1	2
2 nd Season	1	2
3 rd Season	1	2
4 th Season	1	2

IF YOU DID NOT HUNT IN ILLINOIS DURING THE 1998 SPRING TURKEY SEASON, SKIP TO PART B.
IF YOU DID HUNT, PROCEED WITH QUESTION #4.

4. How many days did you actually hunt in Illinois during the 1998 Spring Turkey Season?

1st Season days
 2nd Season days
 3rd Season days
 4th Season days

5. How many turkeys (gobblers and/or bearded hens) did you kill and retrieve in Illinois during the 1998 Spring Season? (circle number for appropriate answer)

0.....1.....2.....3

6. How many turkeys did you cripple (shoot and injure) but could not retrieve in Illinois in 1998? (circle number for appropriate answer).

0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5 or more

7. In which Illinois county did you hunt most during the spring turkey season in 1998?

County: _____

8. In your judgement, has the number of turkeys in the area you hunted most in 1998 increased, decreased, or remained unchanged during the past three years? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Increased.....1 Decreased.....2 Unchanged.....3 Don't know.....4

9. In your judgement, is the number of turkeys in the area you hunted most in 1998 too low, about right, or too high? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Too low.....1 About right.....2 Too high.....3 No opinion.....4

10. From your perspective, is the number of spring turkey **HUNTERS** in the area you hunted most in 1998 too low, about right, or too high? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Too low.....1 About right.....2 Too high.....3 No opinion.....4

11. Did you pay someone for the right to hunt turkeys on their land in Illinois in 1998? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Yes.....1

No.....2

12. We would like an estimate of your turkey hunting expenses for spring turkey hunting in Illinois in 1998 only. Please include money spent on clothing, turkey calls, new gun, ammunition, transportation, lodging, food, leased hunting land, film, permits, taxidermy, etc. (circle number for appropriate answer)

\$0 - \$25 1

\$26 - \$50 2

\$51 - \$100 3

\$101 - \$200 4

\$201 - \$300 5

over \$300 6

PART B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPINIONS

1. How many years have you turkey hunted? _____ Yrs.
2. How many years have you hunted one or more other game species? _____ Yrs.
3. What other game species did you hunt during the 1997-1998 season? (circle all numbers that apply)
- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Deer 1 | Quail 4 | Geese 7 |
| Squirrels 2 | Rabbits 5 | Ducks 8 |
| Pheasants 3 | Raccoons 6 | Other 9 |
4. How many turkeys have you killed and retrieved during your lifetime? _____ Turkeys
5. What is your opinion of the present 4-season (5, 6, 8 & 12 days) framework whereby nearly all hunters are able to obtain at least 1 permit? (circle number for appropriate answer)
- Like.....1 Dislike.....2 No opinion.....3
6. Currently, Illinois turkey hunters can obtain up to a maximum of 3 permits for the spring season provided the county permit quota is unfilled and permits are available. How many permits do you think an individual should be able to receive? (circle number for appropriate answer)
- 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 or more
7. The 1998 Spring Turkey Season dates in Illinois were April 6-10, April 11-16, April 17-24, April 25-May 6 in the Southern Zone and April 13-17, April 18-23, April 24-May 1, May 2-13 in the Northern Zone. How do you feel about using similar dates for the 1999 Spring Turkey Season? (circle number for appropriate answer)
- Too early.....1 Too late.....2 About right.....3 No opinion.....4

8. Legal spring turkey hunting hours in Illinois are currently from 1/2 hour before sunrise to noon. Which of the following most closely describes your preference for legal hunting hours? (circle number that most closely matches your opinion)

Keep the legal hunting hours "as they are now" 1
 Allow hunting from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1 p.m. 2
 Allow hunting from 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset 3
 No opinion 4

9. Currently, Illinois hunters who wish to hunt turkeys with archery equipment during the spring season may do so using the regular spring turkey permit. This permit is only valid for one of the four seasons (except free landowner permits). Some hunters have proposed that the Department of Natural Resources should offer a limited number of special spring turkey hunting archery permits that would be valid throughout all four spring seasons. However, hunters could purchase only one of the special spring turkey archery permits, and they would NOT be eligible to purchase a regular spring turkey permit. Do you like or dislike this proposal? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Like.....1 Dislike.....2 No opinion.....3

10. If the new spring turkey archery permit (described in #9 above) is available for the 1999 spring season, would you purchase one? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Yes.....1 No.....2 Undecided.....3

11. In what type of community do you now live? (Circle number for appropriate answer).

Rural (county, farm, town less than 500 residents) 1
 Small town (500 to 20,000 residents) 2
 Urban (city, over 20,000 residents, suburban) 3

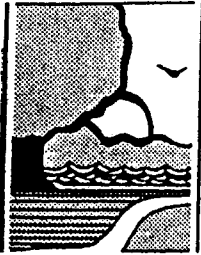
12. You are (circle appropriate number): Male.....1 Female.....2

13. Which category best describes your total household income for 1997? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Under \$10,000 1	\$30,000 to \$40,000 4
\$10,000 to \$20,000 2	\$40,000 to \$50,000 5
\$20,000 to \$30,000 3	Over \$50,000 6

Thank you for your cooperation.

POSTAGE IS PREPAID



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor • Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

You are one of a select group of Illinoisans asked to furnish information about your activities during the recent spring turkey hunting season.

The popularity of wild turkey hunting in Illinois has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. In 1970, 1,000 hunters harvested 25 gobblers during Illinois' first modern-day turkey season. During the 1997 spring season, a total of 39,738 permits were issued which resulted in a reported harvest of 7,139 turkeys.

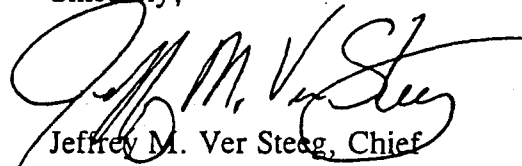
With rapidly expanding wild turkey populations, increasing numbers of hunters and increasing hunting opportunities, your reply is extremely important, even if you did not hunt turkeys this past season or were not successful. Only a limited number of turkey hunters can be contacted, therefore, your response is urgently needed.

The information you provide will be used to better manage the Illinois wild turkey. Our goals are to safeguard turkey populations, to grant safe turkey hunting opportunity to the maximum number of license holders, and to maintain an attractive level of hunter success.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the parts of the questionnaire that apply to you. If you do not remember exact figures, please give your best estimate.

Drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Postage is prepaid.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:PAS:bd

Enclosure

Figure 2. The letter that accompanied the 1st mailing of the questionnaire.



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

Recently we mailed you a spring turkey hunter questionnaire, and requested that you fill it out and return it as soon as possible. We have not received your form at this time. Perhaps you have misplaced the questionnaire or haven't found time to complete it.


We are enclosing another questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return to us. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please discard this one. The information supplied by you and other turkey hunters being sampled will be of great value to the Department of Natural Resources in better directing the management of our wild turkey resources.

Please answer the questions that apply to you and return the questionnaire even if you did not hunt turkeys, or were not successful, during the recent spring season.

Please drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Postage is prepaid. Your prompt attention will be sincerely appreciated.

Thank you.

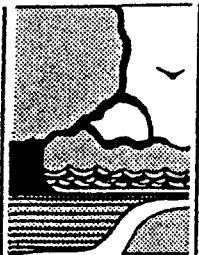
Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:PAS:bd

Enclosure



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

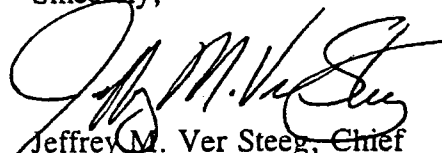
This letter is to remind you that we still would like to receive your copy of the Spring Turkey Hunter Survey questionnaire. We don't like to keep bothering you, but this information is very important which only you can provide.

Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. We hope you will complete it and return it as soon as possible. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please disregard this one. Your response is needed, even if you did not hunt turkeys, or were unsuccessful, this past season.

Postage is prepaid for returning the questionnaire. Please drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Your prompt attention will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:PAS:bd

Enclosure

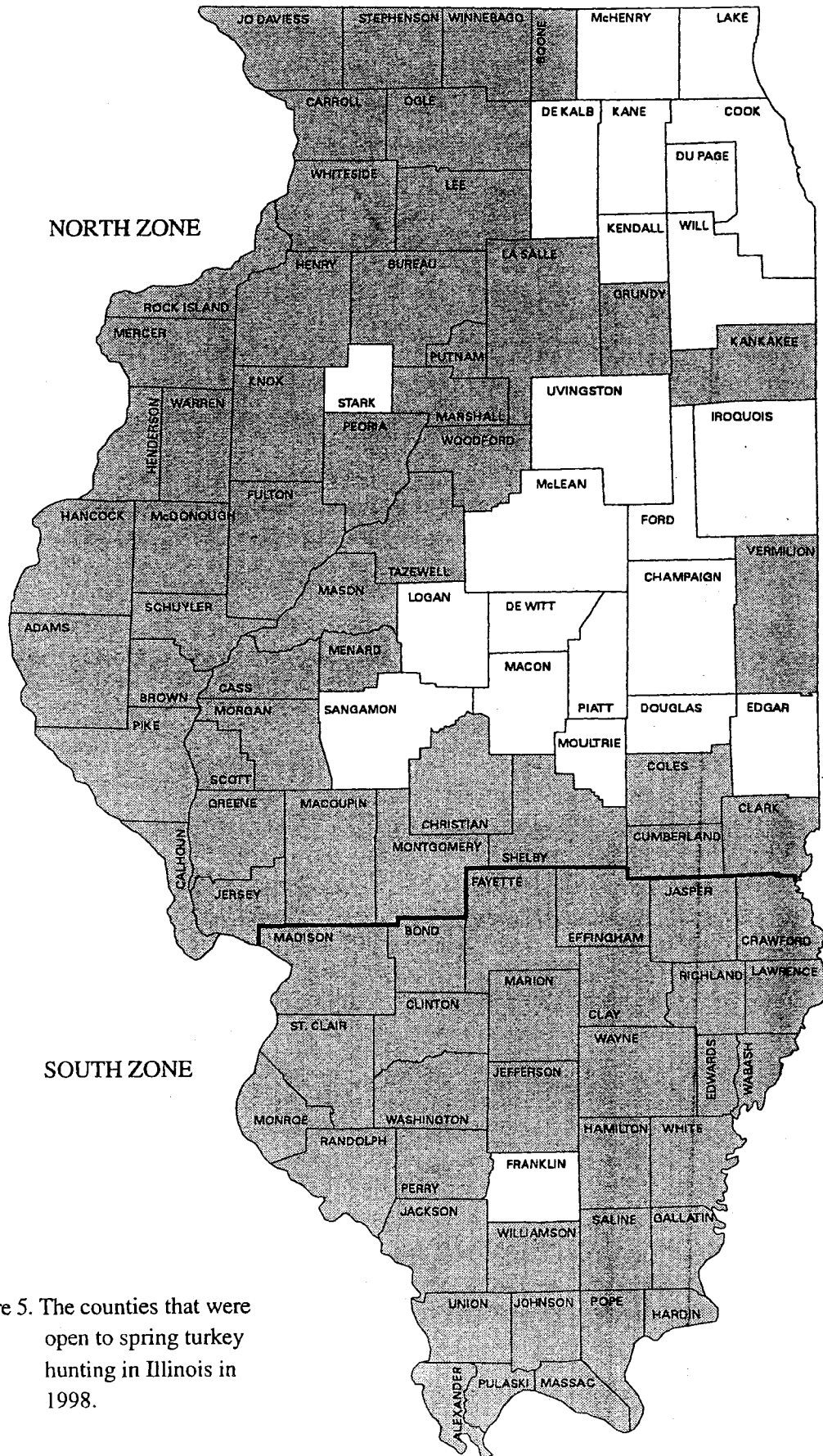


Figure 5. The counties that were open to spring turkey hunting in Illinois in 1998.